

## **Trader turns climate activist; Former HSBC agent raising money to support protests in London**

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### **Body**

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A former trader at HSBC Holdings Plc and Lloyds Banking Group Plc, used to seeing millions of dollars flash across his screen in an instant, is working with climate activists to help marshal donations to support two weeks of protests in London.

Andrew Medhurst, whose 30-year career in banking spanned Europe and Asia as a derivatives trader and risk manager, quit his last job at a government-backed pension provider in January to join the swelling ranks of Extinction Rebellion, a group calling for drastic government action to slow and then halt climate change.

"When I worked in the bank there's no way I would've been allowed to take risks that would potentially blow up the bank and make it bankrupt - but that seems to be what politicians are doing" with climate change, Medhurst said standing in the shadow of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, home to one of several camps set up by the group across central London this week.

Medhurst joined the group with his wife and their dog on Extinction Rebellion's first London protest in November that saw five bridges in central London blocked by their brand of non-violent protest. "It was a bit scary at first," he said, but he soon warmed to the sense of community.

Medhurst, 53, says that while at pension provider Nest, the mounting climate science that showed global warming was moving toward causing irreversible harm to the world weighed on him. He felt the best way he could protect his two children was to quit and join Extinction Rebellion.

"Clearly the banks are sending huge amounts of money to fossil fuel companies and obviously that needs to stop," he said. "For banks to continue to lend millions, if not billions, of pounds to the fossil fuel industry, it just feels wrong to me."

Since Extinction Rebellion launched in late October 2018, the group has raised 2.5 million pounds (\$3.1 million US) in the U.K., over half of which came through an online crowd funding campaign ranging from 10 pounds to donations in their thousands. Since Oct. 5, the group has raised well over 250,000 pounds, he said.

For the second time in six months, activists from Extinction Rebellion blocked streets and bridges around Westminster and the Houses of Parliament this week by locking themselves to vans and each other.

This week's action coincided with similar protests in cities from Wellington to Madrid and Montreal, disrupting work at government buildings and financial companies. The groups are calling for policies that cut fossil fuel emissions fast and overhaul environmental policies to respond to what they call the climate emergency.

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Among several demands, the movement wants politicians to aim for net-zero emissions worldwide by 2025, a quarter of a century quicker than the U.K.'s current plans. It's urging government ministers to establish a citizens' assembly to analyze climate change and draw up proposals that would feed into legislation.

"There are a lot of privileged people in the City of London, so I would encourage them to think about what it takes to protect their children," Medhurst said.

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